

Doesnt

Every

RESEARCH ON

PREVELANCE & DYNAMICS OF

# CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

AMONG SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN  
IN CHENNAI

Child

Supported by

Save the Children  
Sweden

Count?

Tulir

CENTRE FOR THE PREVENTION &  
HEALING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE



Title  
Malavika P.C.

**Supported by**



**Save the Children**  
Sweden

February 2006  
Printed in India

**Tulir**

CENTRE FOR THE PREVENTION &  
HEALING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

57A, L-Block, 26th Street, Anna Nagar East,  
Chennai - 600 102. Ph : 044-2663 2026

Email : [tulircphcsa@yahoo.co.in](mailto:tulircphcsa@yahoo.co.in)

Web : [www.tulircphcsa.org](http://www.tulircphcsa.org)

Sexual abuse of children is disturbing, abhorrent and very often an unimaginable crime but the unfortunate reality is that it exists. When children do not feel safe, their other rights are endangered. While it is the responsibility of us adults to be the primary safeguards to care for and protect the interests of children, with the continually increasing incidences of abuse of children being reported, there seems to be a failure in this most basic of obligations.

The United Nations and the Government of India have both recognized the seriousness and pervasiveness of violence against children and are currently in the process of conducting related studies, worldwide and nationally, respectively. At a more local level, to understand the different experiences of sexual abuse faced by children and the issues and dynamics surrounding these events, Tulir – Centre for the Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse with support from Save the Children – Sweden, has undertaken a study among Standard 11 school going children in Chennai.

A society's integrity and worth is not based on whether cases of child sexual abuse exist. Instead, it is based on the acceptance of the problem and proactive steps taken to respond in a timely and appropriate way to ensure that every child may benefit from its caring and foresight to truly have the right to feel safe all the time!



## WHY THIS STUDY?

Child Sexual Abuse is the biggest kept secret in India due to societal denial, ignorance, and silence owing to the discomfort generated out of acknowledgement. It is a universal problem that occurs across gender, caste, religious, ethnic, occupational and socio-economic groups, threatening a child's right to protection as defined under different sections of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child sexual abuse directly threatens Article 19 (which describes the child's right to protection from abuse) and Article 34 (which discusses the child's right to protection from sexual abuse specifically) of the Convention.

With fear, shame, guilt and the ensuing stigma unfortunately being characteristic features of sexual abuse for boys and girls, the issues of gender stereotypes cause various differences in the way abuse is perceived by community and the abused children themselves, and the subsequent availability and efficacy of support networks. Abuse of girls is usually kept hidden under the guise of family honour and issues of "purity", while abuse of boys is often ignored to the extent that sometimes it is even considered impossible. Also, because of the widespread ignorance and silence on the issue, a number of myths have taken root and grown in our society and culture. Neglect of child sexual abuse has happened not only in the sphere of society and community, but in professional arena as well. Therefore there is a scarcity of empirical information on child sexual abuse within the Indian context, and consequently the indigenous body of knowledge on the subject is very limited.

This research was undertaken by Tulir – Centre for the Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse with support from Save the Children – Sweden, in order to address some of the concerns and gaps discussed above. With its perceived role being to help break the silence around the issue, dispel certain myths and provide



research-based information on the dynamics of abuse, its aim is to inform subsequent action at the levels of advocacy, action and policy, with the following specific objectives:

- To determine the prevalence of child sexual abuse among school going girls and boys in Chennai, Tamil Nadu
- To understand the nature of child sexual abuse with relation to
  - Type of abuse
  - Frequency of abuse
  - Age of onset of abuse
  - Relational proximity of the abuser
  - Process of abuse
- To understand the disclosure pattern of children and accessibility to support systems.
- To contribute to the existing information and knowledge base on Child Sexual Abuse in India.
- To contribute towards improving Child Protection policies and practice.
- To strengthen the initiative to have a comprehensive law on Child Sexual Abuse in the country.
- To contribute towards spreading awareness and information about child sexual abuse among children, families and the stakeholders in the larger community.



## METHODOLOGY

The target group for this study included all children studying in 11<sup>th</sup> standard in schools within the Chennai Corporation Zone limits. Standard 11 students were chosen to represent the child school-going population of Chennai as they would have completed studying the human reproductive system, besides having the cognitive ability and social maturity to appropriately understand and answer the questions.

There are a total of 426 schools having Standard 11, within the Chennai Corporation Zone limits, all of which were sent a letter requesting them to allow their students to participate in this study. It was decided that the study sample would comprise of all the 11<sup>th</sup> standard students from schools that give such permission. While many schools were interested, only 24 schools could give permission for data to be collected within the time period stipulated for this purpose, and the study was conducted among 2211 students from these schools. Primary data was collected from the children using a self-reporting anonymous questionnaire, which had been tested and finalized following a pilot study conducted in seven schools with 519 students.

Before every data collection session with children, an interactive orientation was conducted with them, discussing child sexual abuse and giving them information of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially on articles regarding abuse). Information was also given about available professional support systems such as Tulir-CPHCSA and Childline, and the students were encouraged to tell their trusted adults to seek help in the event of occurrence of abuse. Crucial topics, such as how abuse is never child's fault, were also emphasised.



Efforts were made at all stages of research to follow strict professional and ethical standards at all times, considering the sensitive topic of the study and the young age of the respondents. The major ethical standards followed were:

- Confidentiality

All measures were undertaken to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. The questionnaire did not require the respondents to reveal any personal identification. In case the respondents wanted to speak to the researchers after the study suitable measures were taken to protect their identity.

- Freedom to participate

After attending the orientation programme the children were given a choice as to whether they wanted to participate in the research or not. Their participation was strictly a decision they had to make. Similarly the respondents had the freedom to stop answering the questionnaire at any time in between if they wished to.

- Informed Consent

The orientation programme gave the respondents an insight into the background and purpose of the study. They were made aware of the support systems which were in place in case they wanted to discuss the study further. The fact that they had the freedom to participate or not to participate was stressed upon.

- Multi-Disciplinary Team

A multi-disciplinary team comprising of professionals from social work, medicine, law, and education a team was formed. They had been informed about the purpose of the study and they have agreed to provide appropriate interventions and support for participants who might seek assistance following the research.

## DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions have been used:

CHILD: Any person below the age of 18 years

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: Any behavior by an older or more powerful person on a child for his/her sexual gratification. This includes both touch as well as non-touch forms, including, but not limited to:

- Exhibitionism
- Voyeurism
- Making the child touch offender's private parts
- Touching the child's private parts
- Forcing or tricking the child to watch pornography
- Sexual intercourse (vaginal/ anal/ oral)

NUCLEAR FAMILY\*: A unit composed of a husband, wife and their unmarried children, where "unit" refers to "a group of persona who lived together in the same house and took their meals from the common kitchen". This also includes "sub-nuclear" family, which is a unit composed of husband and wife, or a widow/ widower and her/his unmarried children, or a single individual.

JOINT FAMILY\*: When a person belonging to one nuclear family is added to another nuclear family, the latter becomes a "joint family".

\*{Source: Shah, A. M. (March 2, 1996): *Is the Joint Household Disintegrating?*, Economic and Political Weekly, p. 537-542}



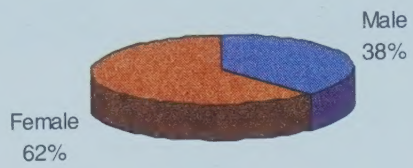
The total number of child participants in the research was 2211, of which 847 were boys while 1364 were girls. The participants belonged to a range of socio-economic strata and school types. The profile of the participants is:

Participant category	Frequency
<b>SEX</b>	
Male	847
Female	1364
<b>AGE</b>	
Upto 15 years	753
16-18 years	1454
Above 18 years	4
<b>FAMILY TYPE*</b>	
Joint	748
Nuclear	1403
<b>FAMILY INCOME (per month)</b>	
Less than Rs. 6,000	824
Rs. 6,000-12,000	396
More than Rs. 12,000	361
Do not know	630
<b>SCHOOL TYPE</b>	
Municipal / Corporation school	489
Private school	767
Government aided	955

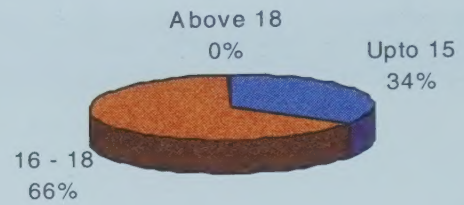
\* There is a missing value in the arithmetic sum of this category due to no responses by some participants.



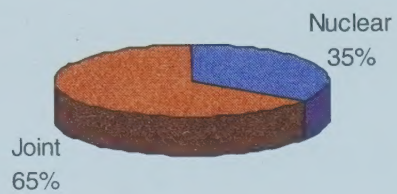
**Sex**



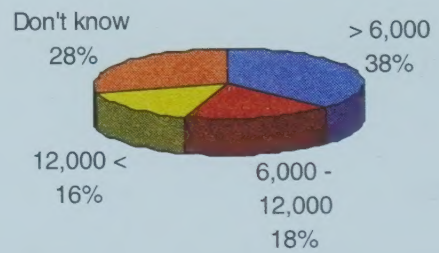
**Age**



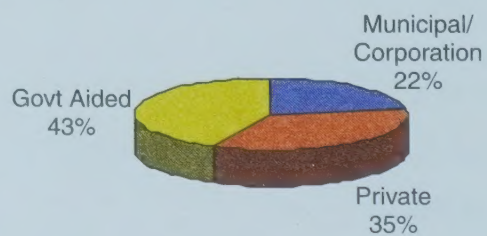
**Family Type**



**Family Income**



**School Type**

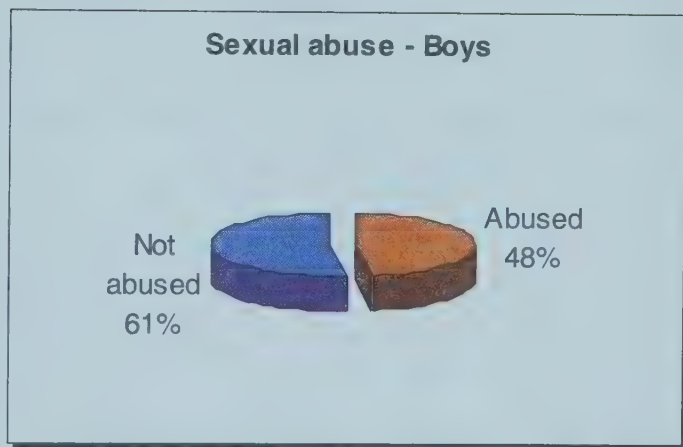
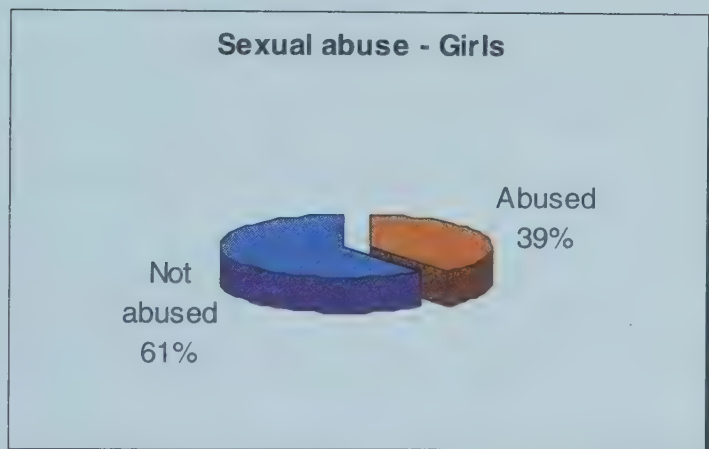




## SEXUAL ABUSE - PREVALENCE

The results of this study suggest that the crime of child sexual abuse is extremely widespread in its prevalence. Out of a total of child 2211 participants, 939 had faced at least one form of sexual abuse at some point in time, that is, 42% of these children have faced sexual abuse in one form or the other.

	Reported sexual abuse	Total
Boys	405	847
Girls	534	1364
Boys and Girls	939	2211





The rate of prevalence of abuse of 42% can also be viewed as suggestive of the prevalence of abuse of children in India, which has a large child population with almost 38% of its total population falling within below 18 years age bracket. When seen in relation with the entire child population, these figures indicate a horrifying and appalling picture of the enormity of sexual abuse of children. At the same time, these figures also challenge the common misunderstanding that child sexual abuse is essentially a “western” problem, and does not happen within Indian society and culture.

The sex-wise distribution of data on prevalence of sexual abuse also present significant results. For instance, it is often believed that boys are not sexually abused – a myth often dangerously reflected in parental, familial, community and professional attitudes. The findings of this study completely refute this. Not only are boys abused, their abuse is extremely prevalent as well, shown by the figures that 48% of boys who participated in the study had been abused. With regard to girls, the results show that 39% of girls had faced abuse. While these findings, when compared, may give the impression that the abuse of boys is more prevalent than that of girls, this may not necessarily be indicative of the larger social realities. The abuse of both girls and boys is highly stigmatized within Indian society. Due to the strongly male-dominant patriarchal nature of Indian society, abused girls are often disbelieved and/or blamed for their abuse, with abuse usually being associated with “loss” of virginity and notions of family honor often playing an extremely significant role in this process. Also, sex and sexuality are taboo topics in Indian society, more so for girls than boys. All these factors may have hindered girls from disclosing about abuse faced by them, even though the questionnaires were anonymous. Also, many children, due to the general silence on the subject of sexual abuse and lack of awareness, may not have been able to relate their experiences of abuse to the questions asked, or may not perceive those experiences as abusive. These factors too may have led to a noteworthy level of under-reporting among all children in general, and girl children especially. Also, the limitations of



undertaking research on a subject as sensitive as child sexual abuse must be carefully considered. Therefore, it may be stated that though the boy participants of this study reported a higher prevalence rate of sexual abuse than the girl participants, it may not be representative of a wider occurrence. At the same time, the research findings state with conviction that sexual abuse of both boys and girls is widely prevalent.

The results contradict various other myths and popularly held perceptions about child sexual abuse in India, a major one being the extremely common perception that it happens only in poor and illiterate families. The study included children from various socio-economic strata of society, and there did not seem to be any dramatic difference between the prevalence of child sexual abuse between these strata; in fact the prevalence of sexual abuse in upper and middle class was found to be proportionately higher than in lower and lower-middle class, as is evident in the graph below (the criteria used for stratification: family income less than Rs.6,000 per month = Lower and Lower-middle class; between Rs.6,000 and Rs.12,000 per month = Middle class; higher than Rs.12,000 per month = Upper class).

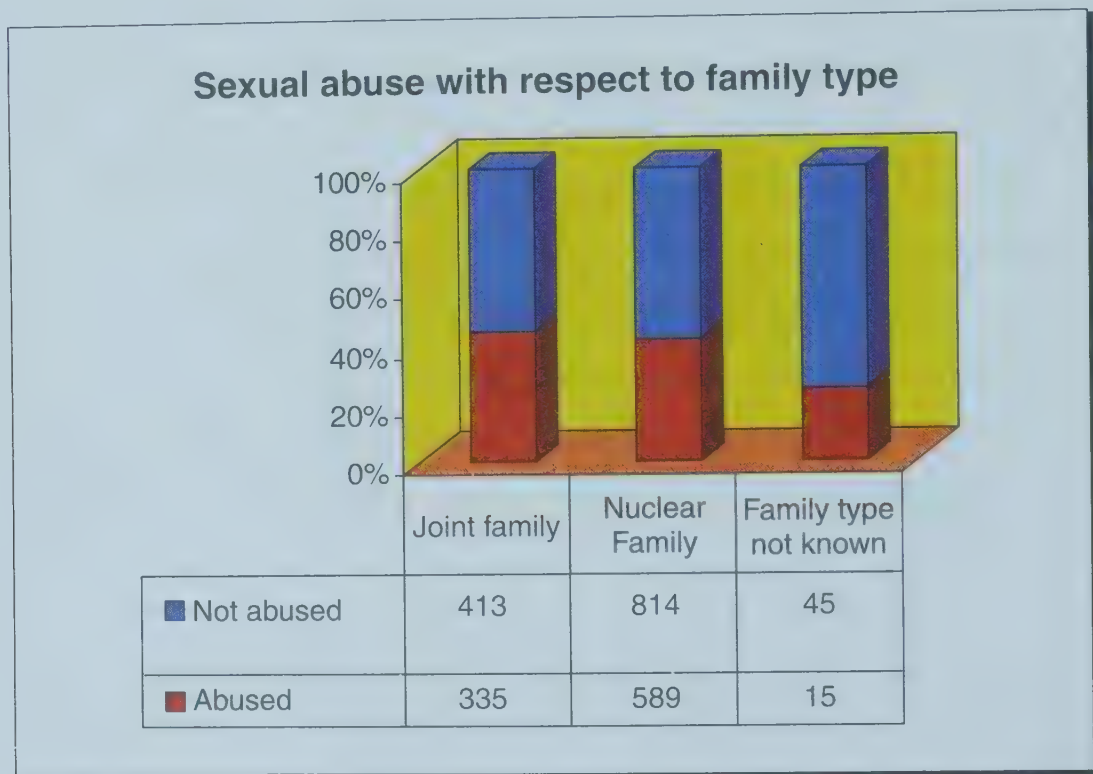
Similarly, another popular myth is that sexual abuse does not take place within joint families, and that it happens within nuclear families only. This is

**Sexual abuse with respect to Socio-economic class**



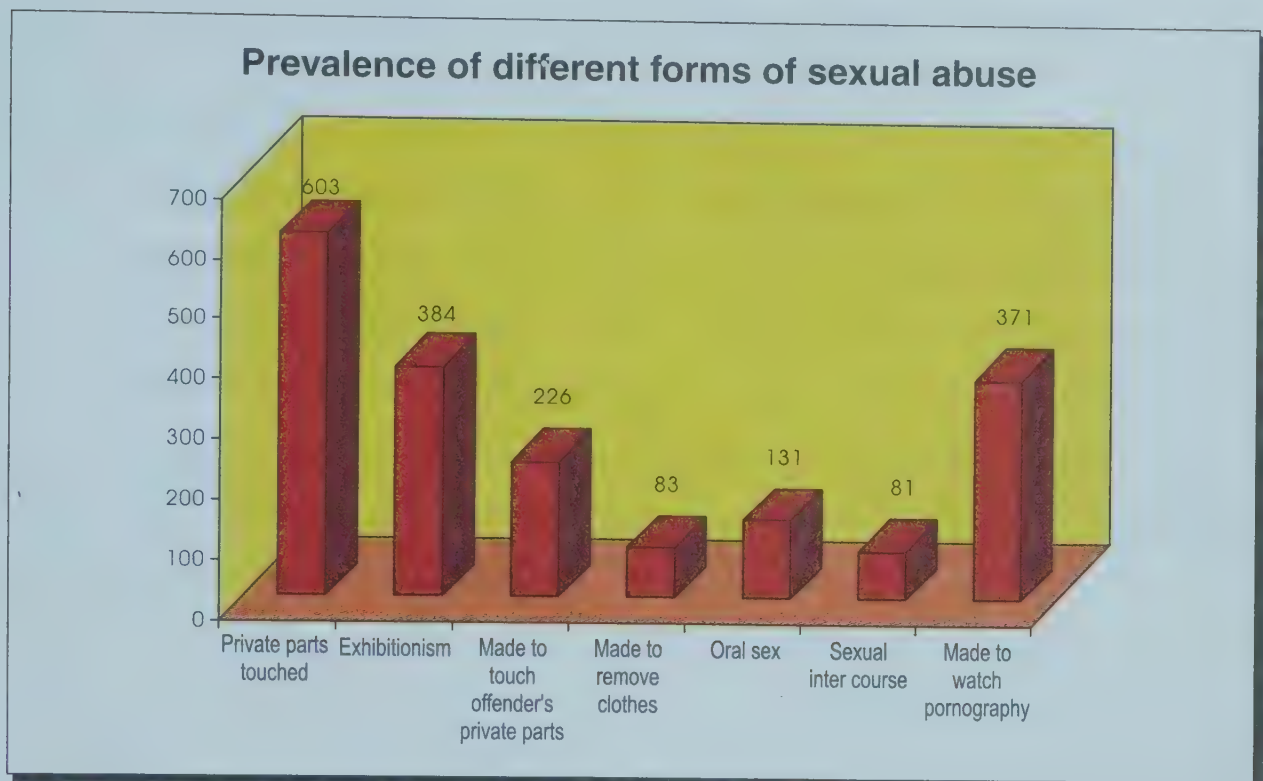


often attributed to the element of a greater degree of supervision, especially by the elderly, in joint families. However, the results of this study do not endorse this viewpoint, as sexual abuse is found to be as prevalent in joint families as it is in nuclear families. This may be because though the degree of supervision may be high in many joint family system, the number of people having access to the child is also greater in these families.



The abuse faced by children includes a wide range of activities from non-contact forms such as voyeurism, exhibitionism to fondling, molestation, sexual intercourse, making the child touch offender's private body parts etc, with the study asking children questions about some of the forms of sexual abuse, to estimate their respective prevalence.





*Due to multiplicity of responses, the arithmetic sum of individual prevalence figures for each of the abuse types is more than the total number of children.*

As can be observed, the most prevalent forms of sexual abuse are touching children's private parts, exhibitionism and forcing and/or tricking children to watch pornography. The high rate of abuse in the form of touching children's private parts may also be due to widespread sexual harassment at public places (popularly, though inappropriately, known as "eve teasing").

*"A guy of about 17 hugged me from behind while I was walking down the road when I was about 11. I don't remember much about it now but it still disturbs me a lot."*

*- Girl, 15*

*"When I was studying in 10<sup>th</sup> standard, I saw some boys who kiss the other boys for fun and irritate them."*

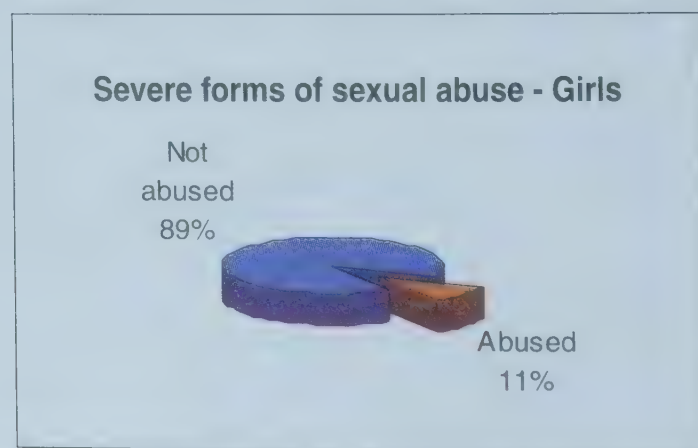
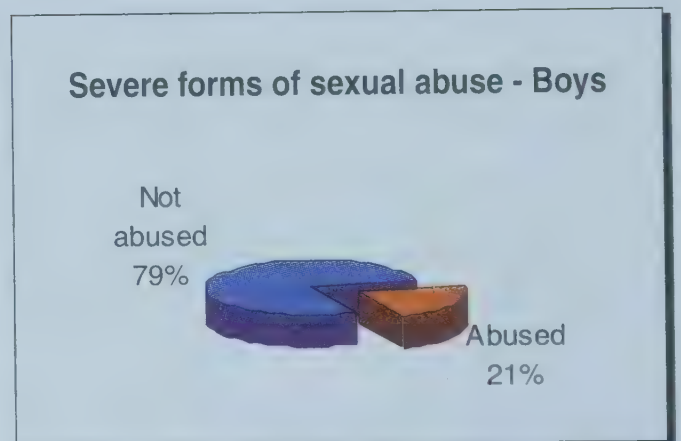
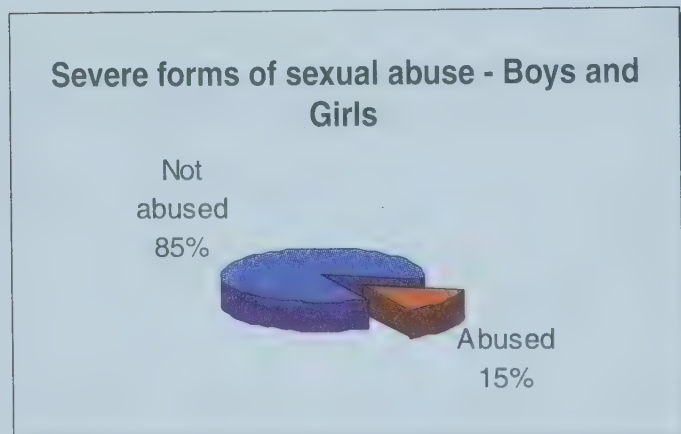
*- Boy, 16*



## SEVERE FORMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

The prevalence of more severe forms of sexual abuse demands special attention. Though all forms of sexual abuse are serious and deserve concrete action, severe forms may have a higher potential of causing harm in the short and long term. Of the different forms of sexual abuse studied as part of this research, oral sex, sexual intercourse, making the child touch offender's private parts and making the children take off their clothes and looking at them or taking their pictures are considered here as severe forms of sexual abuse.

	Reported severe sexual abuse	Total
Boys	179	847
Girls	146	1364
Boys and Girls	325	2211



It may be observed that the proportion of abused boys is more than that of abused girls for severe forms of sexual abuse as well. Again, it may be noted that the prevalence of abused girls may be far more than that reported in this study, which may not have surfaced because of factors discussed previously.

## THE ABUSERS

*"When I was three years old, one of my uncle's friends took me to the terrace and exposed his penis and asked me to expose my vagina."*

- Girl, 15

*"When I was studying in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> standard someone stayed in our house. He called me and told me a story and as I was listening he took my hand and made me touch his penis."*

- Girl, 16

*"I was forced to touch a woman's private body parts. She was my neighbour."*

- Boy, 16

*"My cousin brother tried to have sex with me. This happened when I matured. And he often forces me to do it."*

- Girl, 16

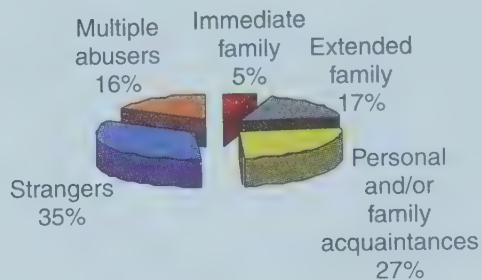
*"It may not seem so bad, but a few years ago, a man stood right outside our school gate and under our classroom window and shouted out foul language and took off his pants. The fact that it was right outside our school made me feel very insecure."*

- Boy, 15

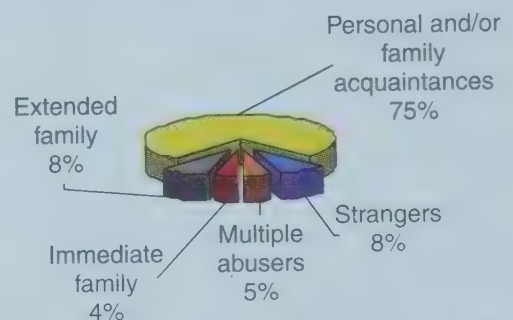


The abusers are often considered to be dirty old men, and "stranger danger" is commonly believed to be the biggest threat to children's safety. However, the data made available to this study supports what has been indicated before by previous studies on child sexual abuse across the world as also demonstrated in our experience, that the abusers are more often than not people who are known to the child. This trend is clearly visible in the graphs below, for each category of abuse:

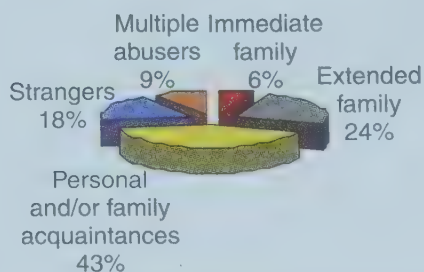
**Abusers - Touching child's private parts**



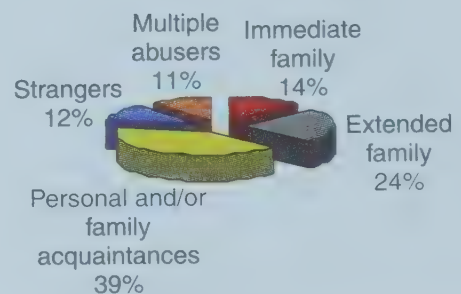
**Abusers - Making the child watch pornography**



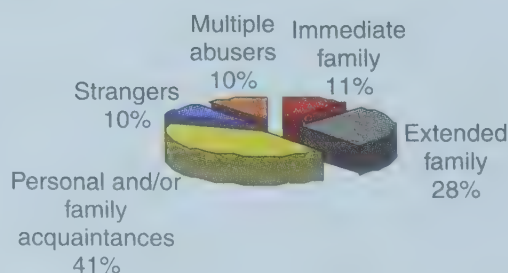
**Abusers - Making the child touch abuser's private parts**



**Abusers - Oral Sex**



**Abusers - Sexual intercourse**



*Immediate Family* : Father, Mother, Siblings

*Extended Family* : Grandparents, Uncles, Aunts, Cousins

*Personal and Family Acquaintances* : Such as Friends, Family Friends, Teachers, Neighbours, Domestic Help.

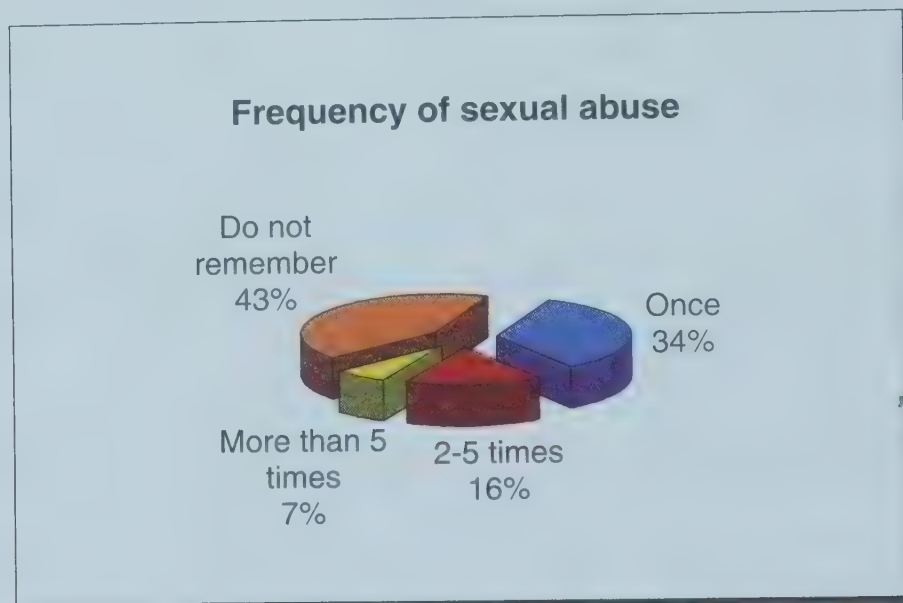
As can be observed from these graphs, the majority of abusers in each form of abuse are people who are known to the child, whereas the strangers are more often than not a minority. The only two forms of abuse where the strangers constitute a sizeable number are touching the child's private parts and exhibitionism. Both of these forms of abuse are often part of sexual harassment at public places, which is often perpetrated by strangers, and therefore the percentage of strangers as abusers in these two cases is especially high. However, abuse in the form of sexual intercourse, oral sex, making the child touch abuser's private parts etc. most often requires a greater and much closer access to the child for the abuser to be able to gain trust and confidence of the child often by building a relationship with him/her over a period of time and then abusing the child. Such access is mostly the privilege of people who are known to the child and who may be in a position of power, authority and trust over her/him. For these reasons, the majority of abusers are people who are known to the child, a fact reflected in the data presented here. Also important to note, with regard to showing children pornography, is the very high percentage of individual and family acquaintances such as friends, neighbors, teachers, drivers, and domestic help etc. The study reveals that a sizeable percentage of participants who selected this option, mentioned that they were made to watch pornographic materials by their own friends. Besides the fact that the participants may have actually been forced and/or tricked into watching such material, the participants may also have included sharing of pornographic materials amongst friends while responding to this question, which is indicative of the high rate of viewing pornographic materials such as books, video CDs and websites by young people today. This demands introspection by communities and professionals as to their role, responsibility and response in terms of young people having to resort to accessing pornographic material for information on sex and sexuality, which is often inaccurate, inappropriate and unhealthy, due



to a dismal lack of approachable and informative resources.

## FREQUENCY OF ABUSE

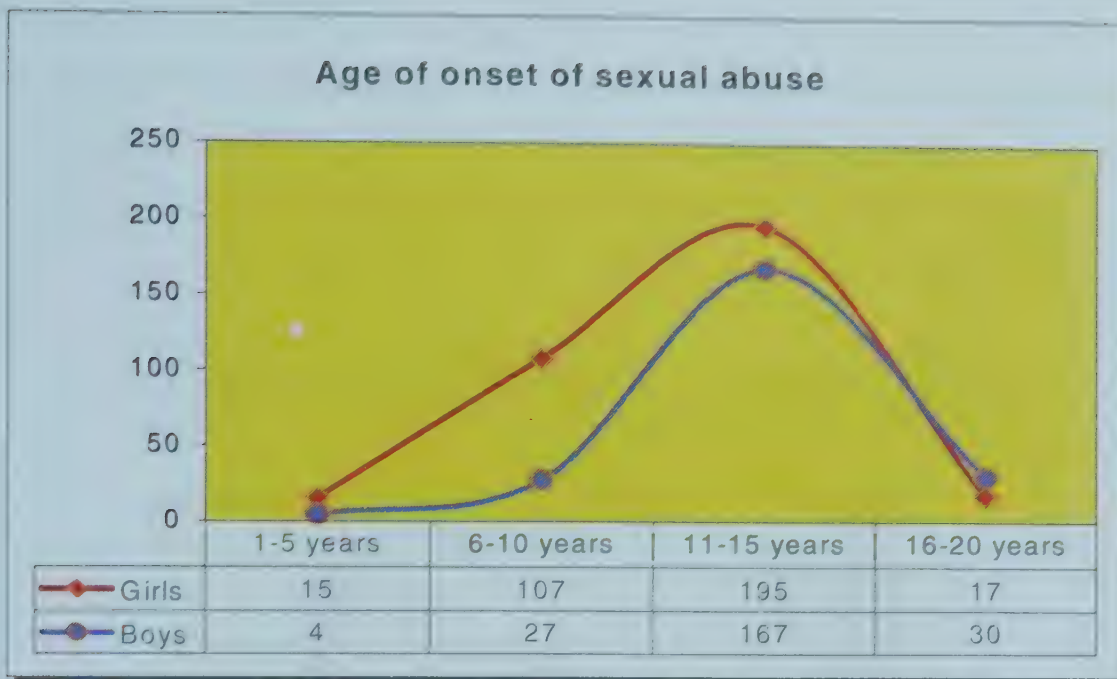
It was found that a vast majority of participants could not remember the number of times abuse happened. A distribution of responses from those who had been abused with respect to frequency of abuse is given below:



The experiences of Tulir – CPHCSA and of other organizations/practitioners suggest that abuse by strangers may be a one-off incident (such as in cases of sexual harassment, exhibitionism by strangers etc.) whilst abuse by known people is very often repeated over a period of time. Therefore, it may be suggested that a majority of those who were abused once may have been subjected to abuse by strangers, whereas those who were abused repeatedly, may have been abused by people they were familiar with.

## THE AGE OF ONSET OF ABUSE

Participants were asked about the age when their abuse first happened/started. A total of 228 boys and 334 girls who had been abused responded to this question. The trend that emerged from the responses is:



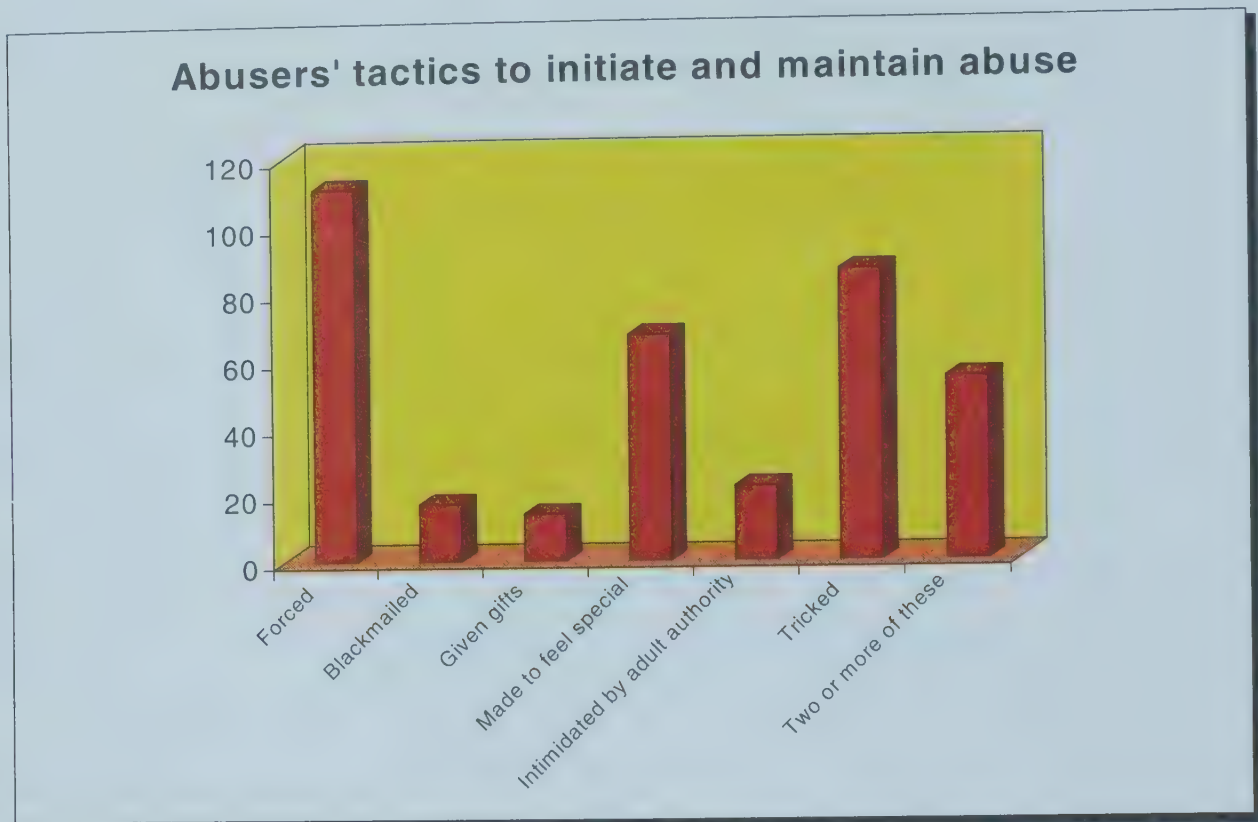
As can be observed here, the age of 11-15 (that coincides with onset of puberty) is the age of onset of abuse for most girls and boys. However, it is interesting to note that while there is steady rise in the abuse of girls as they advance in age till the age group of 11-15 years, there is sudden jump in the abuse of boys from the age group of 6-10 years to the age group of 11-15 years. This may be analyzed in relation with the earlier discussion on adolescents watching or being made to watch pornography (the study had a large number of boys who said they had watched or had been made to watch pornographic material by their peers). This jump in the onset of abuse may also be linked to a greater access to pornographic material made available through their own peer group.

## SEXUAL ABUSE – THE METHOD TO THE “MADNESS”

As much is it important to know about the prevalence of sexual abuse of children, it is far more significant to explore its process and dynamics. Various myths and perceptions, along with widespread ignorance on the issue, have led society to believe that child sexual abuse is often an act of “sheer madness” carried out arbitrarily. On the contrary, research and experience has shown



time and over that sexual abuse of children is very often a pre-planned insidious abuse of a relationship by the abuser over the child. The findings of this study also suggest this understanding - when asked about how the abuse was initiated and maintained in terms of its process, 371 participants who had been abused disclosed in relation to this question.



As per the research findings, the most common tactic used by the abusers against children in order to abuse them is force. Equally relevant to notice in this data are two other often used tactics of abusers – trickery and making the children feel special in order to abuse them and to keep that abuse a secret, besides being blackmailed, given gifts and intimidated. It is important to take note of these tactics because they form the most important part of the process of abuse, and indicate the carefully thought-out path that an abuser often takes in order to first prepare a child for abuse and later to maintain the abuse. This process is known as “grooming”, and refers to a series of steps an abuser takes, such as gaining access to the child, developing a relationship with the child, making the child feel special by providing special attention and gifts,

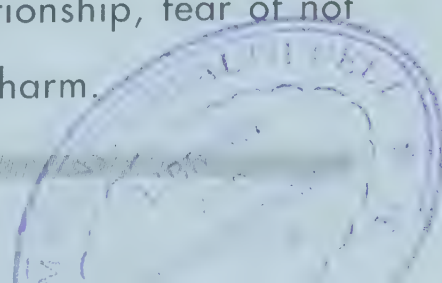
gradually beginning to touch the child eventually leading to sexually abusive acts. This process is important from the abuser's perspective since it allows him/her to build a relationship of power, authority and /or trust with the child. This context usually makes it difficult for the child to say "no" to acts of abuse, and the abuser is also often successful in giving child the impression that s/he is a participant in those activities, and/or that these activities must be kept a secret. However, an understanding of this process is very limited among different stakeholders, leading often to a misunderstanding about the nature of sexual abuse itself, and sometimes even to attitudes and actions which are against the interest of the child, such as disbelieving the child, blaming the child for abuse, or ridiculing her/him for not having disclosed earlier.

## DISCLOSURE AND SEEKING HELP

*"We don't have courage to say that to our parents. But even if we say, it is only half of it, not fully."*

- Girl, 17

Considering the insidious and manipulative nature of abuse, relational proximity to the abuser and the potential for stigmatization within society, disclosing about abuse can be a very intimidating experience for abused children. However, this voicing is an extremely crucial step towards stopping the abuse and at the same time and may also contribute significantly towards healing. Unfortunately, the experience of disclosure about sexual abuse is fraught with fears for many children – arising out of the myths, shame and silence that surround the issue. These fears may range from the fear of losing love since the abuser and the child usually share a relationship, fear of not being believed, fear of being blamed and fear of further harm.





*"I was blackmailed by my cousin brother, and he often forces me to do it (have sex) ... .. I was not able to tell this to my father, because he has got a good name in the family. He used to see me in the wrong way. Once I told this to my close friend. She told me, "They won't do it unnecessarily. Your appearance may have made them like that."*

*- Girl, 16*

*"I am really in a confused state what to do for this. I can't lose their (friends') relationship because they are all affectionate towards me."*

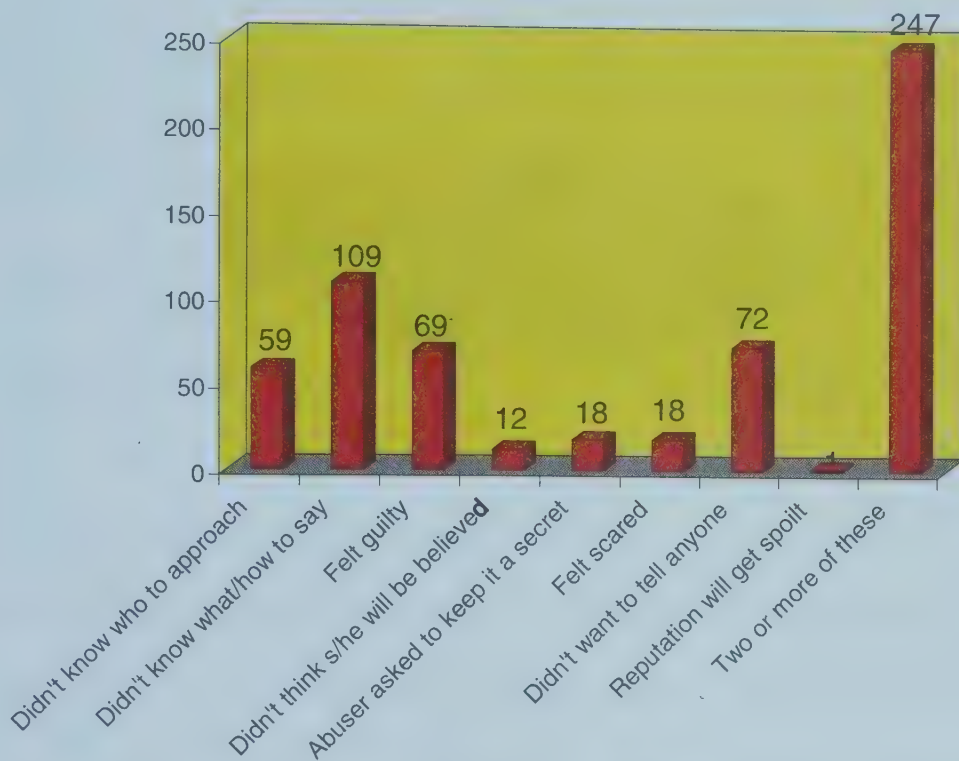
*- Girl, 14*

*I never told anyone what happened to me in 10<sup>th</sup> standard, because I would be blamed."*

*- Girl, 16*

Such apprehensions in the minds of children regarding disclosure of their abuse also suggest that there has been a failure to a certain extent of the adult society and systems to be able to create safe and effective support structures whether in terms of family/community response or professional services for abused children to be able to disclose and have their fears and concerns addressed. Some of the concerns, fears and anxieties that participants had about disclosure were:

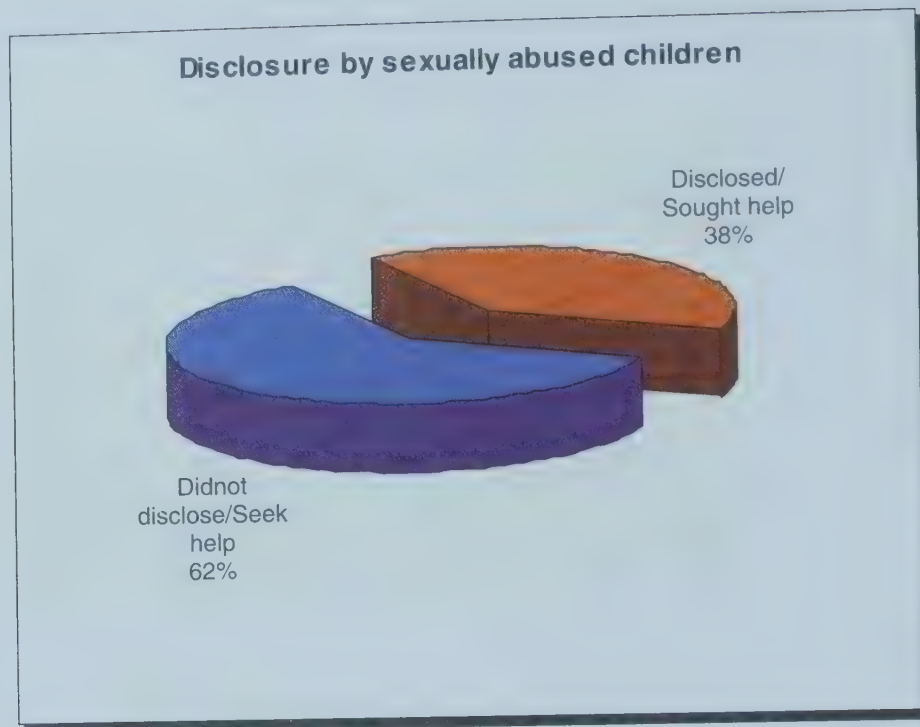
### Fears of disclosure



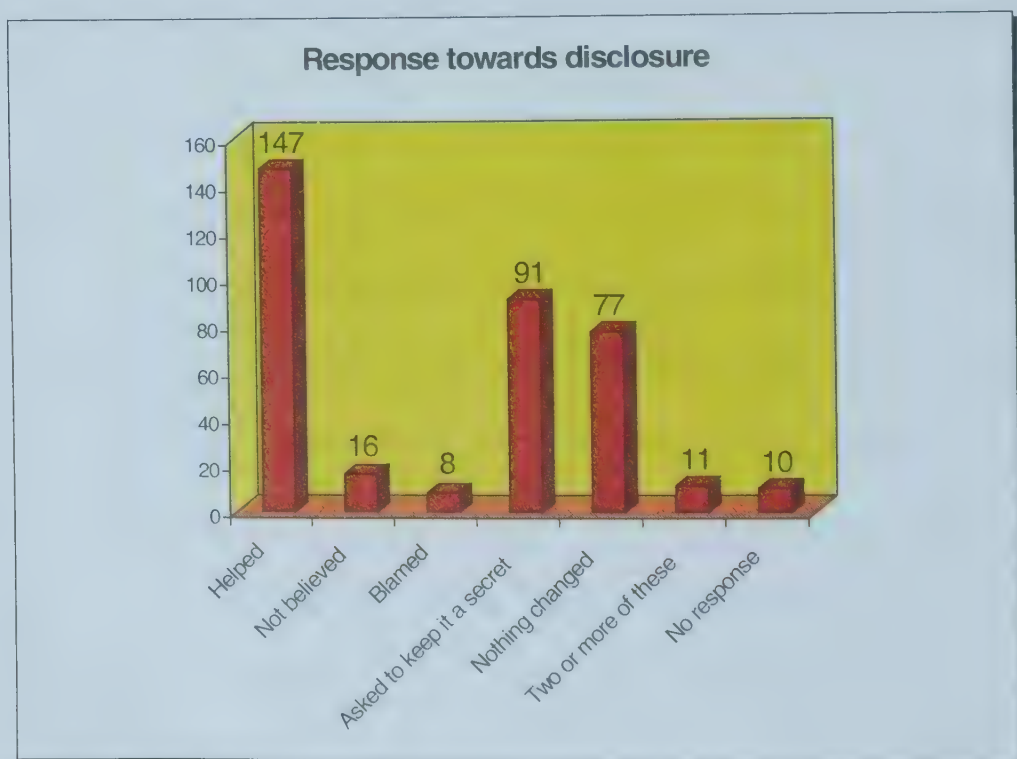
Considering such high prevalence of fears and anxieties among abused children, the fact that most children never disclose their experiences of abuse must not come as a surprise. Out of a total of 939 children who reported to have had been abused, only 360 had ever sought help!

As a corollary to these findings, and knowing that adults cannot always be around children for supervision and protection, it is important to discuss the need for children to be provided with age-appropriate and rights-based information on sexual abuse, so they can participate in their own protection. The lack of such information for children often results in them not having the confidence to tell, not knowing whom/where to approach for help, and how to tell – factors which then act as obstacles when it comes to breaking the silence and seeking help.





These statistics should be viewed also in relation with the response these disclosures were met with. While it is most heartening to observe that almost 40% of children who disclosed were helped against abuse in one way or the other, it is equally appalling to note that the others were not helped, but instead were disbelieved, blamed or told to keep it a secret.



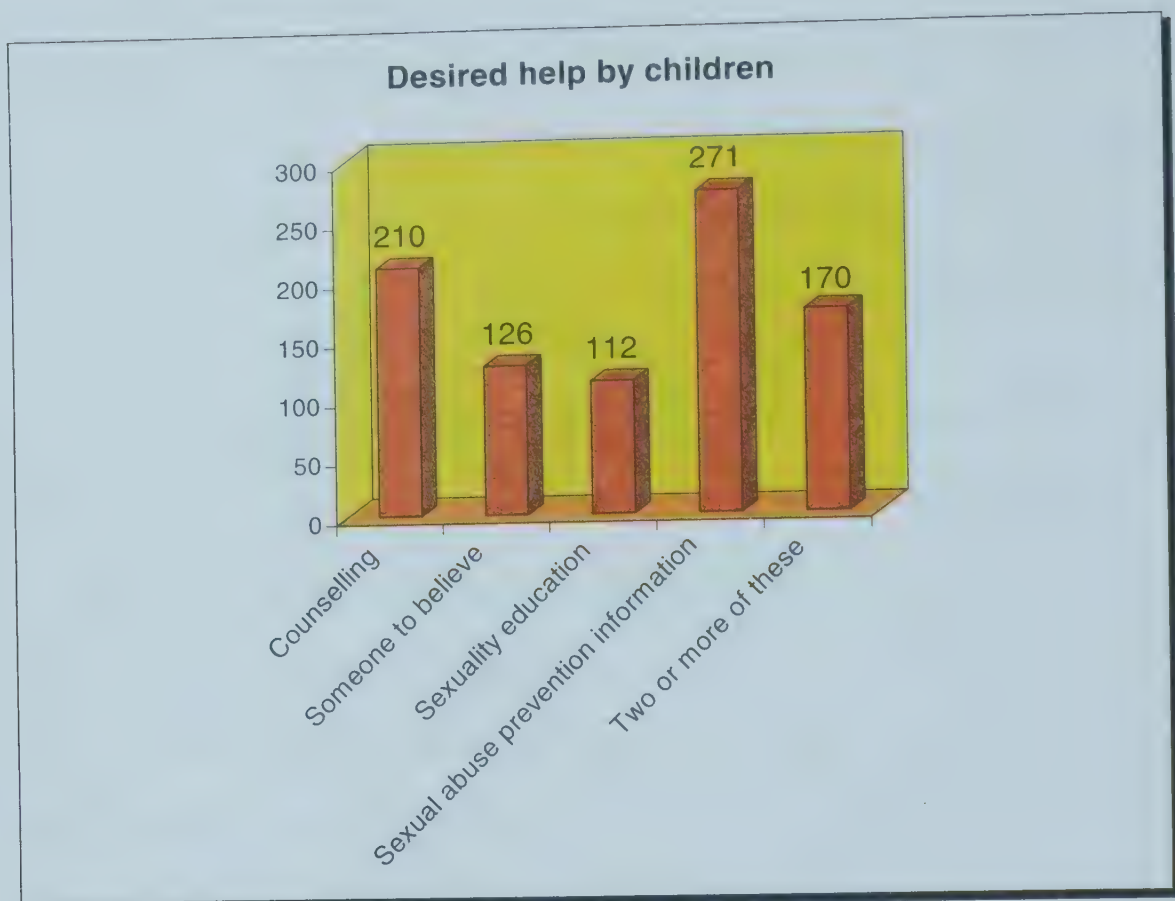
While raising serious concerns regarding the nature and efficacy of support available to children in situations of distress, these figures also try to explain to some extent the severe underreporting of violence against children to the formal appropriate authorities, such as the police.

It is also interesting to find that most abused children disclosed to their friends. Considering the lack of age-appropriate information available to children to understand such violence and participate in protection, and the relative powerless status accorded to children by the larger society, these friends are also usually not in a position to help their friends effectively, which then is reflected in the fact that many children who disclose are not helped and nothing changes with respect to abuse even after the disclosure. After friends, the study shows that many children disclose to their mothers.

## HELP / INFORMATION NEEDED

As has been discussed earlier, the resources available to children in terms of information on sex, sexuality and sexual abuse are limited, and so are support structures for help in situations of distress. This lack of resources and support was expressed as a concern by the children themselves, when asked about the kind of help or information they would like to receive. Also, these resources and support structures need not always be professional and specialized in nature – the affirming and supportive response by the family, community and friends, being of paramount importance as well.





As is evident, a large number of children want information on protecting themselves against sexual abuse, and on sex and sexuality. In the current scenario, availability of information on both these subjects is severely limited, and many times efforts to meet these needs of children are met with suspicion and lack of active support from the adults. Such an attitude may then result in children turning to unhealthy and inaccurate sources of information on sexuality, or staying fearful, silent and helpless in the event of occurrence of sexual abuse – both of which have surfaced strongly in this study. Also, it is almost tragic to note that the only help desired by many children is that they wanted someone to believe their experiences of abuse, a strong indicator of the usual response of disbelief towards children's accounts of sexual abuse.

## CONCLUSION

Child Sexual Abuse is one of the most fundamental violations of children's rights and usually an underlying obstacle, to their overall development. While it is expected that children will be protected by adults and systems, including parents, families, teachers, community, and the State, our study estimates that at least 42% of our children will experience some form of sexual abuse before they reach the age of 18.

This is because child sexual abuse does not occur in a vacuum. The offenders are usually amongst us. They are family members, teachers, neighbors, friends etc. They use trickery, force or exploit their positions of authority. They take advantage of a child's innocence and unconditional love.

Because we as adults have often failed in protection of children, we must now help children, through non-threatening and age-appropriate means, to participate in their own protection. As our knowledge of the aftermath of sexual abuse of children increases, the need to find ways to prevent and to ensure safety of children from victimization of any form is paramount.

Prevention has increasingly gained recognition as the most prudent and cost effective strategy for addressing child sexual abuse. More importantly prevention, through the concept of Personal Safety Education empowers every child to exercise the right to be safe all the time.



Personal Safety Education is a methodology that promotes the safety of self against abuse. The program is an extension of the safety rules we teach our children, i.e. don't play with fire, look both sides before and while crossing a road, etc. Besides empowering children to take part in their own protection, it strengthens the ability of those morally and socially responsible for the protection of children, i.e. the State, parents, significant other stakeholders and the larger community.

The focus of Personal Safety Education is based on three integral components – on the provision of accurate age appropriate information to the child, skills to act on that information and self-confidence for the courage to practice skills learned.

While in India we are just beginning to acknowledge the existence of child sexual abuse, Tulir - CPHCSA has the belief and audacity of hope that it will not be before long that the society realizes the prevalence with its subsequent significant impact (and accompanying physical, social and health costs). The idea of dealing with child sexual abuse may seem daunting but it should not overwhelm us. The response to child sexual abuse should be handled with a view to increasing awareness, while establishing and implementing sensitive and viable policies and standardized protocols, requiring the convergence of various stakeholder disciplines and systems, to work effectively towards healing abused children's body and spirit.





## TULIR - CPHCSA

Tulir - Centre for the Prevention & Healing of Child Sexual Abuse is a registered, non-government, non-profit organisation committed to working against child sexual abuse in India.

### Our Objectives :

- To support and participate in local, national & international efforts to promote and protect the rights of the child.
- To raise awareness on child sexual abuse.
- To work towards improving policy and advancing practice to prevent and address cases of child sexual abuse with a special emphasis on the psychosocial wellbeing of children.
- To provide direct intervention services in the areas of prevention and healing of child sexual abuse.
- To undertake research, documentation & dissemination of information on child sexual abuse.

## SAVE THE CHILDREN SWEDEN

### The vision

Save the Children works for:

- a world which respects and values each child
- a world which listens to children and learns
- a world where all children have hope and opportunity

### The mission

Save the Children fights for children's rights.

We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.



Supported by  
**Save the Children**  
Sweden

Regional Programme for South & Central Asia  
c/o SGUK OSCAR  
Lalitpur, GPO Box : 5850, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Web : [www.savethechildren.org.np](http://www.savethechildren.org.np), [www.rb.se](http://www.rb.se)

**Tulir**  
CENTRE FOR THE PREVENTION &  
HEALING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

57A, L-Block, 26th Street, Anna Nagar East,  
Chennai - 600 102. Ph : 044-2663 2026  
Email : [tulircphcsa@yahoo.co.in](mailto:tulircphcsa@yahoo.co.in)  
Web : [www.tulircphcsa.org](http://www.tulircphcsa.org)